

Martina the Beautiful Cockroach: A Cuban Folktale

By: Carmen Agra Deedy
Illustrated By: Michael Austin

Publisher: Peachtree Publishers
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Art Medium: Acrylic
Genre: Folk Literature

SUMMARY: In this humorous retelling of a Cuban folktale, a cockroach interviews prospective husbands and tries to decide whom to marry.

BOOKTALK: Have you ever heard of the Coffee Test? What do you think that might be? Let's read this book together and see how Martina uses the Coffee Test. I wonder if any of our predictions will be correct?

AUTHOR:

Carmen Agra Deedy

Carmen Agra Deedy was born in Havana, Cuba. She and her family moved to the United States in 1963 after the Cuban Revolution. She grew up in Decatur, Georgia and now lives in Atlanta with her three daughters. She has been writing and traveling around the world telling stories for almost twenty years. To learn more about the author, visit her web site at <http://www.carmendeedy.com>.

Other books written by the author include:

Agatha's Feather Bed: Not Just Another Wild Goose Story
TreeMan
The Secret of Old Zeb
The Last Dance
The Library Dragon
The Yellow Star: The Legend of Christian X of Denmark

ILLUSTRATOR:

Michael Austin

Michael Austin is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi. He lives in Georgia with his wife and sheep dog. Learn more about the author at <http://www.austinillustration.com>.

Other books illustrated by the illustrator include:

The Horned Toad Prince
Late for School
Railroad John and the Red Rock Run
13 Monsters Who Should be Avoided
Late For School
Bats! Bats! Bats!

CHALLENGING WORDS (pronunciation, spelling, defining): Senora, tia, una peineta, una mantilla, abuela, un consejo incredible, gallo, custom, reflection, un perica

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Explain what the Coffee Test is. Was it a good test for Martina to use in the story?
2. Did the story's ending surprise you? Why or why not?
3. Has your grandmother ever given you good advice? What was it?
4. What is a suitor and why were they coming to see Martina?
5. Who finally passed the Coffee Test?
6. How were human items used to decorate Martina's house?
7. What new Spanish words did you learn in the story?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Language Arts

- When reading the story aloud, stop before the last page and have children predict how the mouse knew about the coffee test.
- Keep a list of all the Spanish words the author uses in the story and discuss their meanings.

Science

- Compare and contrast Martina with real cockroaches

Social Studies

- Locate Cuba on a map or globe.
- Share information about Cuban culture, foods, customs and history.

Life Skills: Resourcefulness, sense of humor, caring, truthfulness, and common sense

INTERNET SITES:

Visit the author's web site at <http://www.carmendeedy.com/>.

Visit the illustrator's web site at <http://www.austinillustration.com>

Learn more about cockroaches at:

<http://www.amentsoc.org/insects/fact-files/orders/blattodea.html>

<http://yucky.discovery.com/noflash/roaches/>

Welcome to the world of Beautiful Martina, the Cuban cockroach who doesn't know coffee beans about love and marriage. Explore essential ingredients of this exciting, new book based on the Cuban folktale including: ilustraciones increíbles by Michael Austin; Panchlora nivea—the green cockroach of Cuba; the rich flavor of café cubano; the origins of the folktale and un poquito de español! Contact Us | Deedy Books |

“Martina the Beautiful Cockroach” is a beautiful Cuban folktale that everyone who loves books about bugs will definitely appreciate. Carmen Agra Deedy has done a superb job at writing it “Martina the Beautiful Cockroach” is a Pura Belpre Honor Book by Carmen Agra Deedy along with gorgeous illustrations by Michael Austin and it is about how a young and beautiful cockroach named Martina tries to find a good husband by following her Cuban grandmother’s advice in spilling coffee on her suitor’s shoes. If you are tired of reading the same old clichés in children’s stories, Martina the Beautiful Cockroach: A Cuban Folktale by Carmen Agra Deedy won’t disappoint. This story has beautiful, vibrant illustrations that give the cockroach characters and their world liveliness. Carmen Agra Deedy, Michael Austin. Martina the beautiful cockroach doesn't know coffee beans about love and marriage. That's where her Cuban family comes in. While some of the Cucarachas offer her gifts to make her more attractive, only Abuela, her grandmother, gives her something really useful: un consejo increíble, some shocking advice. [show more.](#)